

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
ROUTING SLIP

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TO:

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18	C/IPD/OIS		X		
19	D/OIS		X		
20	C/IMS/DO		X		
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SUSPENSE		26 Jul 85			
		Date			

Remarks To # 6: For compliance with para # 3 please, with info copy to DCI.

Executive Secretary

12 Jul 85

Date

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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

Executive Registry

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12 July 1985

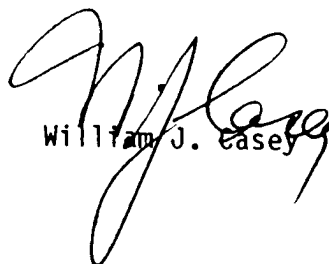
Dear Mr. Smith,

For some reason your letter about Virginia Hall seems to have been misplaced and just came to my attention. I did know Virginia Hall, but only slightly. She was in Lyon as a New York Post reporter very early on, working for SOE. She came into OSS in 1944. We wouldn't send her back to France because she was too well known, but she was quite insistent on it. It was finally decided that if she learned to become a radio operator she could serve usefully in an unobtrusive way which would not jeopardize those with whom she worked. She accepted this and became a radio operator and was again dropped into France at about the time of the invasion.

I tell you all this from memory. She lived down in Maryland somewhere and I heard about two years ago that she had passed away. There are references to her in Michael Foote's book, SOE in France.

We have sent a lot of World War II records over to the Archives, and by copy of this letter I am asking the people in charge of that process to give you any guidance which may occur to them and also to tell you how to take whatever steps are necessary through the Freedom of Information Act.

Sincerely,


William J. Casey

Mr. David C. Smith

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Mr. William J. Casey
Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, DC 20505

May 22, 1985

Dear Mr. Casey:

It has been many years since we last spoke, but you may recall the story of the black American agent we discussed who operated out of France during World War II. You had never heard of him, but some of the contacts you supplied were extremely helpful in fleshing out the story. Among them was the late Tom Cassady of Lake Forest, IL, who supplied us with a great deal of information about his own activities with the U.S. Embassy at Vichy and later with the OSS in France.

Despite our best efforts, we were unable to develop the full story of Johnny Nicholas's intelligence activities in the Allied cause during World War II. We continue to believe that key information about him remains classified. But that is not the reason for this letter. Inasmuch as you were extremely interested in the story during our research phase, I thought you might like to see the book that Hugh McCann and I finally completed (a complimentary copy is enclosed). The book was published late in 1982 in London, although it still has not been published in the U.S. Motown Productions Inc. in Hollywood purchased an option on the book for a theater movie last August and is moving ahead on that project. I would appreciate your thoughts on the book after you have had a chance to read it.

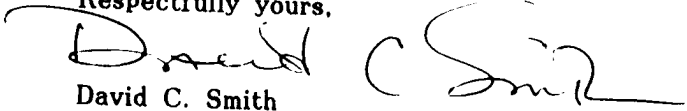
During our research, Tom Cassady mentioned several OSS persons operating in France during the war. He was especially laudatory of Virginia Hall (later Virginia Goillot, after she married former OSS associate Paul Goillot in 1950). I am certain you knew Miss Hall. She had been a correspondent for the Chicago Times and New York Post in Europe during the late 1930s; joined the British SOE in August 1941; transferred to the OSS in April 1944; and continued after the war with the CIA, retiring in 1972. She died in 1982.

McCann and I are now pursuing the Virginia Hall story as a book and a television semi-documentary. We have strong interest in both ventures from publishers and producers. From everything we've learned to date, she was a true heroine. I have a photograph of her receiving the Distinguished Service Cross from Wild Bill Donovan. The French also awarded her the Croix de Guerre and the British presented her with their Order of the Empire. I have seen all of these medals, which her husband retains as well as other pertinent artifacts and documents. We already have those OSS documents that have been declassified; we are pursuing SOE records, although they basically remain classified despite Britain's 30-year moratorium on such information; and

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We have absolutely nothing concerning her CIA assignments, of course, nor do we have the sort of valuable detail that specifically documents her OSS projects. If you agree that her story is worth telling publicly both in the U.S. and overseas, I would appreciate any help that you may be able to provide. Certainly your own personal recollections about her would be immensely helpful as would any potential leads that you may be able to properly provide. If there is anything at all in her CIA file that can be obtained through the Freedom of Information Act, that naturally would be invaluable to us in our research.

Respectfully yours,


David C. Smith

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